

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. With entry of this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 4, 6-8 and 17 and cancel claim 2 without prejudice. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

A. Drawings

The Examiner objected to Fig. 3 for including two reference characters – items 231 and 289 – not discussed in the specification. Applicants have amended the specification at pages 12, 14 and 15 to refer to items 231 and 289 as discussed in more detail in Section B below. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection to Fig. 3.

B. Specification

The Examiner objected to page 5, lines 30-31 for referring to bearings 17 and 19 in relation to shaft 5. Applicants have amended the paragraph to refer to bearings 13 and 15 as illustrated in Fig. 1.

The Examiner objected to page 6, line 19 for referring to helical gear 27. Applicants have amended the paragraph to refer to helical gear 25 as illustrated in Fig. 1.

The Examiner objected to page 6, lines 29-32 for referring to shaft 5 in relation to bearing 19. Applicants have amended the paragraph to refer to shaft 7 as illustrated in Fig. 1. Applicants have made two other amendments to the paragraph. Applicants have amended the reference to “bearing 13” to “bearing 17.” Applicants have amended “a hollow shaft 7 is splined” to “a hollow of the shaft 7 is splined” These amendments are consistent with Fig. 1 and the description of the paragraph at page 6, line 29.

The Examiner objected to page 7, lines 19-20 for referring to roller bearings 17 and 19 in relation to shaft 5. Applicants have amended the paragraph in two places to refer to roller bearings 13 and 15 as illustrated in Fig. 1 and discussed at page 6, lines 1-2.

The Examiner objected to page 12, line 33 and page 15, at what appears to be lines 4 and 8, as describing “washers 237.” Applicants have amended the two paragraphs to refer to “washers 231” as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The Examiner objected to page 14, lines 31-34 as referring to “bolts 291.” The reference to “bolts 291” is at page 13, line 31. Applicants have amended the paragraph at page 13 to refer to “bolts 289” as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The Examiner objected to page 14, lines 31-32 as referring to “hollow shaft 299” and page 15, lines 10-11 as referring to “hollow shaft 101.” Applicants have deleted the reference numbers “299” and “101” from the respective paragraphs.

The Examiner objected to page 15, line 11 as referring to “needle bearings 229.” Applicants have amended the paragraph to refer to “ball bearings 229” as illustrated in Fig. 3.

The Examiner objected to page 15, line 15 as referring to “spline portion 103” and “seal 105.” Applicants have amended the paragraph to delete the reference numbers. Applicants have also amended the paragraph to describe that the spline portion is “formed on the inner surface of the hollow thereof.” These amendments are consistent with Fig. 3 and the description of the paragraph at page 15, line 15.

The Examiner objected to page 15, at lines 14, 30-31 and 34 as referring to elements illustrated in Figs. 8 and 9. As described at page 3, lines 26-31, Figs. 8 and 9 are applicable to any embodiment, including the third embodiment. Applicants have amended the paragraph at page 11, line 26 to indicate that Figs. 8 and 9 are applicable to the description of the third embodiment.

Finally, the Examiner objected to the title for referring to “the same.” Applicants have amended the title to delete “same” and have added “the support structure.”

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all the objections to the specification.

C. Rejection Under § 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 6 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Examiner stated that the phrase “disposed in the vicinity of” in claims 1 and 6 and the phrase “needle-like” were indefinite. Applicants have amended claims 1, 6 and 17 to delete these respective phrases. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

D. Claims 1-5

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobayashi (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0078792 A1). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, recites “a pair of first bearings aligned in an axial direction, the first bearings rotatably supporting the input shaft, the first bearings having the power transmission device disposed therebetween.” Support for this recitation is found throughout the specification and drawings including, without limitation, Fig. 1. Fig. 1 illustrates a pair of bearings 13 and 15 supporting a shaft 5 with a reduction gear set 9 between the bearings. (*See also* specification, at page 5, last paragraph.)

Claim 1, as amended, further recites “a pair of second bearings aligned in an axial direction, the second bearings rotatably supporting the output shaft.” Support for this recitation is found throughout the specification and drawings including, without limitation, Fig. 1. Fig. 1 illustrates a

pair of bearings 17 and 19 supporting a shaft 7. (*See also* specification, at page 6, second paragraph.)

Claim 1, as amended, further recites “a housing member for housing the input shaft, the output shaft, the first bearings, the second bearings, the power transmission device and the change-direction transmission device, the housing member including a main body which supports both one of the first bearings and one of the second bearings.” Support for this limitation is found throughout the specification and drawings including, without limitation, the specification at page 4, line 32 to page 5, line 6, page 6, lines 1-6 and 29-31, page 11, lines 10-11 and Fig. 1.

Kobayashi does not disclose a housing member including a main body that supports both one of the first bearings and one of the second bearings. Fig. 1 of Kobayashi shows a transfer case 9 and casings, but none of them is a main body that supports *both* one of the first bearings and one of the second bearings as recited in claim 1. The transfer case 9 merely supports a bearing for supporting direction changing gear 30 as illustrated at the right end of item 34. A casing – separate from transfer case 9 as indicated by the hatching – supports bearings for supporting changing gear 31. The other casings in Fig. 1 are deficient as well in that they are not a main body that supports the recited two bearings.

This is an important difference between the claimed invention and Kobayashi. In gear sets, the relative disposition of gears is strictly controlled as a failure to have the gear sets mesh with each other can result in loss of torque. In the present invention, the gears are supported by a main body so that the disposition of the gears is kept constant. In contrast, in Kobayashi, one gear is supported by a transfer case 9 while another gear is supported by the case adjacent to the transfer case. As a result, in Kobayashi, one must regulate a relative position between the transfer case 9 and the case, which is difficult and affects reliability.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by Kobayashi. Claims 3-5 are not anticipated by Kobayashi for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

E. Claims 6 and 7

The Examiner rejected claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobayashi.

Claim 6, as amended, recites “a pair of first bearings aligned in an axial direction, the first bearings rotatably supporting the input shaft, the pair of the first bearings having the power transmission device disposed therebetween.”

Claim 6, as amended, recites “a pair of second bearings aligned in an axial direction, the second bearings rotatably supporting the output shaft.”

Claim 6, as amended, recites “a pair of third bearings rotatably supporting the first change-direction gear.”

Finally, claim 6, as amended, recites “a housing member for housing the input shaft, the output shaft, the first bearings, the second bearings, the third bearings and the power transmission device, the housing member including a first housing member, a second housing member, and a third housing member, the first housing member supporting one of the first bearings, one of the second bearings, and one of the third bearings.”

Support for these amendments is found throughout the specification and drawings including, without limitation, in the specification passages set forth above with respect to claim 1, the specification at page 5, lines 7-10 and Fig. 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that Kobayashi fails to disclose or suggest “a housing member for housing the input shaft, the output shaft, the first bearings, the second bearings, the third bearings and the power transmission device, the housing member including a first housing member, a second housing member, and a third housing member, the first housing member supporting one of the first bearings, one of the second bearings, and one of the third bearings” for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is not anticipated by Kobayashi. Claim 7 is not anticipated by Kobayashi for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 6.

F. Claims 8-19

The Examiner rejected claims 8-19 as being anticipated by Hideyo (JP Pat. Pub. No. 59-069553) or obvious in view of Hideyo in combination with other references.

Claim 8, as amended, recites “the casing including a main body which rotatably supports the change-direction gear set, the first gear, the second gear and the third gear, and covers for covering the main body so as to house the change-direction gear set, the first gear, the second gear and the third gear in the casing.” Support for this amendment is found throughout the specification and drawings including, without limitation, in the specification at page 13, lines 1-4 and Fig. 3.

Hideyo fails to disclose or suggest the above recitation. The change-direction gear set is composed of a gear at the side of item 5 and a bevel gear 6. The gear at the side of item 5 is not supported by case 1, but rather another member as clearly indicated by the hatching. In contrast, the present invention has a main body that supports the change-direction gear set, the first gear, the second gear and the third gear. This provides uniform support and keeps the disposition of gears constant thereby improving reliability.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 is not anticipated by Hideyo. Claims 8-19 are not anticipated by Hideyo or obvious in view of Hideyo and other references for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 8, as it is believed that the other references do not make up for the deficiencies of Hideyo.

If, for any reason, the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 892-5630 to discuss any steps necessary to place the application in condition for allowance.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing Docket No. 393032007600. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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